

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Original): A method for forming individualized intrafiber crosslinked cellulosic fibers comprising the steps of:

applying an effective amount of a crosslinking agent in the presence of an effective amount of a polyol to a mat of cellulosic fibers,

separating the mat into substantially individualized fibers, drying the treated individualized fibers,

curing the crosslinking agent in the presence of the polyol to form individualized intrafiber crosslinked cellulosic fibers,

wherein the Whiteness Index, ($WI_{(CDM-L)}$), of the individualized intrafiber crosslinked cellulosic fibers is greater than about 69.0.

2. (Original): The method of Claim 1 wherein the crosslinking agent is an α -hydroxy polycarboxylic acid.

3. (Original): The method of Claim 2 wherein the crosslinking agent is selected from the group consisting of malic acid, tartaric acid, citric acid, tartronic acid, α -hydroxyglutaric acid, and citramalic acid and mixtures thereof.

~~34.~~ (Currently amended): The method of Claim 3 wherein the crosslinking agent is citric acid.

[[4]] ~~5.~~ (Currently amended): The method of Claim 3 wherein the crosslinking agent is malic acid.

~~56.~~ (Currently amended). The method of Claim 1 wherein the polyol is selected from the group consisting of acyclic polyols, alicyclic polyols and heterosides and mixtures thereof.

~~67.~~ (Currently amended). The method of Claim ~~56~~ wherein the alicyclic polyol is selected from the group consisting of erythritol, xylitol, arabinitol, ribitol, sorbitol, mannitol, perseitol, and volemitol and mixtures thereof.

~~7-8.~~ (Currently amended): The method of claim ~~67~~ wherein the acyclic polyol is sorbitol.

~~89.~~ (Currently amended): The method of Claim ~~56~~ wherein the alicyclic polyol is myo-Inositol.

~~910.~~ (Currently amended): The method of Claim ~~56~~ wherein the heteroside is selected from the group consisting of isomalt, lactitol, and maltitol or mixtures thereof.

~~1011.~~ (Currently amended): The method of Claim ~~910~~ wherein the heteroside is maltitol.

~~11~~12 (Currently amended): The method of claim 910 wherein the heteroside is lactitol.

~~12~~13 (Currently amended): The method of Claim 1 wherein the polyol is applied to the cellulose mat before the application of the crosslinking agent.

~~13~~14 (Currently amended): The method of Claim 1 wherein the polyol is applied to the crosslink treated individualized fibers before curing.